

EXHIBIT 84

Declaration of Laura Gamo

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
CASE NO. 1:14-CV-954**

**STUDENTS FOR FAIR
ADMISSIONS, INC.,**

Plaintiff,

v.

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
CAROLINA et al.,**

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF LAURA GAMO

DECLARATION OF LAURA GAMO

I, Laura Gamo, hereby make this declaration from my personal knowledge and, if called to testify to these facts, could and would do so competently:

Background

1. I graduated from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH or Carolina) in 2016 with a degree in Media and Journalism and Global Studies, with a concentration in Public Relations. I am currently pursuing a Master in Public Relations at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I am a Hispanic female.

2. I was an out-of-state student from Florida, and I did not know that UNC-CH existed until my senior year of high school. The thing that first caught my attention was the school colors on a mailing. When I started looking at mass communications programs, I learned that Carolina's program was highly rated, and I began to pay closer attention to the mailings that Carolina sent.

3. I applied late to Carolina. UNC-CH offered a travel grant that paid for my flight and hotel to come for a campus visit. I would not have been able to come to campus otherwise, as it was a tough year financially for my family. My mother was sick and unable to work, and my whole family depended on my father's income. As soon as I visited campus, I fell in love with the place. I felt welcome when I saw how diverse the campus was. I knew that, at the time, the University of Florida was the least diverse college in the state. I also visited Florida State University, but the only people who looked like me worked in the dining hall. This was also somewhat the case at Carolina,

and a lot of the Hispanic women working at Lenoir Hall became like aunts and moms to me. That was the case for other Latinx students as well.

4. I was praying for guidance on where to go to school when I visited Carolina, but I was fearful that I would like it, and as an out-of-state student, would have to go into debt or would not be able to afford the cost of attendance. I became a Carolina Covenant Scholar, part of a program that allows low-income students to graduate debt-free with the help of scholarships, grants, and work-study jobs. When I saw that I could receive everything I needed financially, it was the last piece to fall into place in terms of establishing that Carolina was the place for me.

Experience at UNC-CH

5. I had difficulty transitioning to college during my first year. I am very close to my family, and being three states away from home was tough for me. It made me realize who I am. I began to understand that my Hispanic and Colombian heritage and faith are very important to me.

6. I became involved with a campus ministry, which was very racially and ethnically diverse. The Carolina Hispanic Association (CHispA) and the Latinx Collaborative also took me in and guided me through my first year. That was crucial to helping me find my niche and giving me a sense of belonging. During my freshman year, I was the first-year co-chair of CHispA, and I later became the secretary. During my sophomore year, I started working with the Latinx Peer Mentoring program as part of my work-study. Natalie Borrego, a 2014 graduate, started the program, and I eventually became the director. The program allowed students to serve as mentors for first-year

Latinx students. Faculty and staff also mentored three or four undergraduates who each had three or four first-year mentees themselves. The program included social events, personal and professional development, and monthly mentor talks. These talks were really beneficial, and we asked professors about their successes and failures and learned about perseverance.

7. Carolina is great about celebrating diversity. During the Week of Welcome, there are Culture on the Quad performances. I really appreciated that celebration of different cultures.

8. Coming from central Florida, I quickly recognized that some areas of North Carolina have not been exposed to certain people or experiences. I am super patient because I know that it is not those students' fault, it is just what they have or have not been exposed to. At the same time, I get frustrated when someone refuses to understand. I remember one African-American student who kept asking me, "Are you sure you're not white? You don't sound Hispanic." I asked her to please stop asking me that question. Because I moved to the United States when I was six, and although my family members do have an accent, I do not have an accent and fail to fit certain stereotypes perpetuated in popular culture and media.

9. I had some ups and downs at Carolina. I made a point to assure that my group of friends was diverse. I had many Covenant Scholar friends, and not all of my friends were Hispanic. I still sometimes experienced microaggressions.

10. There were times at Carolina where I was the only immigrant in the room. It was sometimes difficult for me to identify with people who are not Carolina

Covenant scholars, and it was also hard for others to understand my perspective. Some students assumed that because I am an immigrant that I am undocumented.

11. A professor once asked me, not maliciously, to talk about immigration in a group presentation because it was not covered in class. I sometimes felt like I was asked to be a spokesperson, but when people are willing to listen and understand, I do not mind at all.

12. It is important to interact with students from different backgrounds and ethnicities. It was cool and important to have people around me that I could relate to, but what taught me most about who I am and who I want to be was exploring different perspectives and ideas. I had meaningful interactions with friends in the dining hall where we would talk about current events and what we thought of them. At other times, professors created those meaningful conversations, often in the School of Media and Journalism. These conversations happened in and out of the classroom, and they helped me solidify my identity, my values, and what I believed in. Sometimes conversations led me to change or shift my perspective.

13. I was a Resident Advisor (RA) for three years. Through the Department of Housing, I was able to work with a diverse group of people. I worked on community immersion and building relationships, and realized that many people had never interacted with people from different backgrounds. Some students from Boone or Murphy, North Carolina had never interacted with Hispanic or international students. It was great to see students forge relationships and identify commonalities, like interest in a TV show or struggling in the same class. It was great seeing those bridges built between people of

different racial identities, ethnic identities, and sexual orientations. It was my favorite thing that I took away from my experience at Carolina and from being an RA.

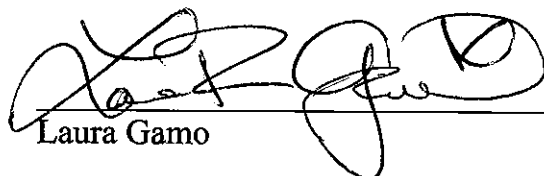
14. As a Public Relations major, I realized that I would be reaching out to all sorts of audiences, trying to figure out how to engage all sorts of people for a specific purpose or goal. It is crucial to understand that your audiences can be really broad and it can be difficult to identify your target audience. Gaining a variety of perspectives helps you identify with whom you are trying to communicate with and how you should go about reaching those people. I want to pursue a career in diplomacy or perhaps with a not-for-profit group, and it is important to find human interest as a common ground.

Conclusion

15. I hope that I contributed to other students' experiences at Carolina, and I know that my diverse classmates contributed to mine. Through my time at UNC-CH, I learned to understand who I am, to found empowerment in that and recognized how I can utilize my experiences to understand and communicate with people that have similar and different identities and experiences. The opportunity that I had to attend Carolina as a Covenant Scholar, and the experiences I had at Carolina, have created a great foundation for my future career as a professional communicator.

I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on: 7/25/17


Laura Gamo